AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 5, 10-21, 26-31, 33-36, 40, 45, 46, 61-66, 68-71, 75, 80-91, 96-101 and

103-105 are withdrawn from consideration as a result of a previous Restriction Requirement and

subsequent election by Applicants. Claims 7-9, 22-25, 32, 42-44, 57-60, 67, 77-79, 92-95, 102

and 106 are currently being considered and are rejected. Please amend claims 32, 67, 102, and

106 as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the

application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Withdrawn) A signal processing method for processing a visible light image

signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light

beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an

infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical

images of the transparent document, comprising:

an edge correction step of performing edge correction of the infrared

image signal and generating an edge-corrected infrared image signal;

a calculation step of calculating a threshold value on the basis of the edge-

corrected infrared image signal;

an extraction step of comparing the threshold value calculated in the

calculation step with the edge-corrected infrared image signal, and extracting edge-corrected

infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation step of executing an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted in the extraction step,

wherein an edge correction amount in the edge correction step is set in association with the deterioration of MTF due to chromatic aberration of an optical focusing system between visible light and infrared light.

2.-4. (Canceled)

5. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein the calculation step includes a generation step of generating a histogram on the basis of the edge-corrected infrared image signal, and calculates the threshold on the basis of the histogram generated in the generation step.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein the generation step includes the step of generating a histogram of frequencies of occurrence of respective gray levels of the infrared image signal.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step includes the step of calculating the threshold value by subtracting a value given by a predetermined relation from a gray level that represents the infrared image signal.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the calculation step further comprises: a step of calculating a standard deviation; and a step of determining the value to be subtracted on the basis of the standard deviation.

10. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step comprises: a step of calculating an intermediate value of the frequencies of occurrence of the

histogram; and a step of calculating the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from a gray level corresponding to the intermediate value.

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 10, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

12. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 10, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

13. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 10, wherein the calculation step further comprises: a step of calculating a standard deviation; and a step of determining the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

14. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step comprises: a step of calculating a maximum frequency of occurrence of the histogram; and a step of calculating the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from a gray level corresponding to the maximum frequency of occurrence of the histogram.

15. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 14, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

16. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 14, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

17. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 14, wherein the calculation step further comprises: a step of calculating a standard deviation; and a step of determining the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

18. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step comprises: a step of calculating a maximum gray level of the histogram; and a step of calculating the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from the maximum gray level.

19. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 18, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

20. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 18, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

21. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 18, wherein the calculation step further comprises: a step of calculating a standard deviation; and a step of determining the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

22. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step comprises: a step of calculating an average gray level of the histogram; and a step of calculating the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from the average gray level.

23. (Original) The method according to claim 22, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

24. (Original) The method according to claim 22, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

25. (Original) The method according to claim 22, wherein the calculation step further comprises: a step of calculating a standard deviation; and a step of determining the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

26. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step comprises: a step of calculating a maximum gray level of the histogram; and a step of calculating the threshold value by multiplying the maximum gray level by a predetermined value.

27. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 26, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

28. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 26, wherein the predetermined

992600 v1

value is externally input.

29. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the calculation step comprises: a step of calculating a maximum gray level of the histogram; a step of calculating an average gray level of the histogram; and a step of calculating the threshold value by subtracting a product, which is obtained by multiplying a difference between the maximum gray level and the average gray level by a predetermined value, from the average gray level.

30. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 29, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

31. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 29, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

32. (Currently Amended) A signal processing method for processing a visible light image signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent document into an image signal of a plurality of pixels, comprising:

a segmentation step of segmenting the infrared image signal of the plurality of pixels into a plurality of blocks, wherein each block includes an infrared image signal of two or more pixels;

a generation step of generating a histogram for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the infrared image signal of each block;

a calculation step of calculating a threshold value for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the histogram generated in the generation step;

992600 v1

an extraction step of comparing the threshold value calculated in the

calculation step with the infrared image signal, and extracting infrared image signal components

not more than the threshold value, for each of the plurality of blocks; and

an interpolation step of executing an interpolation process of the visible

light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted in the

extraction step.

33. (Withdrawn) A signal processing method for processing a visible light image

signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light

beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an

infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical

images of the transparent document, comprising:

a detection step of detecting signal components corresponding to a holder

for holding the transparent document from the infrared image signal;

a replacement step of replacing, when the signal components

corresponding to the holder are detected in the detection step, the signal components by a

predetermined signal value;

a generation step of generating a histogram on the basis of the infrared

image signal that has undergone the replacement step;

a calculation step of calculating a threshold value on the basis of the

histogram generated in the generation step;

an extraction step of comparing the threshold value calculated in the

calculation step with the infrared image signal that has not undergone the replacement step, and

extracting infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation step of executing an interpolation process of the visible

light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted in the

extraction step.

34. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 33, further comprising a step of

calculating an average value of the infrared image signal, wherein the predetermined signal value

replaced in the replacement step is the average value.

35. (Withdrawn) A signal processing method for processing a visible light image

signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light

beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an

infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical

images of the transparent document, comprising:

a detection step of detecting signal components corresponding to a holder

for holding the transparent document from the infrared image signal;

a step of removing, when the signal components corresponding to the

holder are detected in the detection step, the signal components;

a generation step of generating a histogram on the basis of the infrared

image signal that has undergone the removing step;

a calculation step of calculating a threshold value on the basis of the

histogram generated in the generation step;

an extraction step of comparing the threshold value calculated in the

calculation step with the infrared image signal that has not undergone the removing step, and

extracting infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation step of executing an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted in the extraction step.

36. (Withdrawn) A signal processing apparatus for processing a visible light image signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent document, comprising:

an edge correction unit adapted to perform edge correction of the infrared image signal and generating an edge-corrected infrared image signal;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value on the basis of the edge-corrected infrared image signal;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by said calculation means with the edge-corrected infrared image signal, and extract the edge-corrected infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the edge-corrected infrared image signal components extracted by said extraction means,

wherein an edge correction amount of said edge correction unit is set in association with the deterioration of the MTF due to chromatic aberration of an optical focusing system between visible light and infrared light.

37.- 39. (Canceled)

40. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein said calculation unit generates a histogram on the basis of the edge-corrected infrared image signal, and calculates the threshold on the basis of the histogram.

41. (Canceled).

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 67, wherein said generation unit generates a histogram of frequencies of occurrence of respective gray levels of the infrared image signal.

43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit calculates the threshold value by subtracting a value given by a predetermined relation from a gray level that represents the infrared image signal.

44. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 43, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the value to be subtracted on the basis of the standard deviation.

45. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate an intermediate value of the frequencies of occurrence of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from a gray level corresponding to the intermediate value.

46. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 45, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

-10-

47. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 45, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

48. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 45, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

49. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum frequency of occurrence of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from a gray level corresponding to the maximum frequency of occurrence of the histogram.

50. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

51. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

52. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

53. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from the maximum gray level.

54. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

55. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

56. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 53, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

57. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate an average gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from the average gray level.

58. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 57, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

59. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 57, wherein the predetermined

value is externally input.

60. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 57, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

61. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by multiplying the maximum gray level by a predetermined value.

62. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

63. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

64. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum gray level of the histogram;

a unit adapted to calculate an average gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a product, which is obtained by multiplying a difference between the maximum gray level and the average gray level by a predetermined value, from the average gray level.

65. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the predetermined

992600 v1

value is pre-stored.

66. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

67. (Currently Amended) A signal processing apparatus for processing a visible light image signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent document into an image signal of a plurality of pixels, comprising:

a segmentation unit adapted to segment the infrared image signal of the plurality of pixels into a plurality of blocks, wherein each block includes an infrared image signal of two or more pixels;

a generation unit adapted to generate a histogram for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the infrared image signal of each block;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the histogram generated in the generation unit;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated in the calculation unit with the infrared image signal, and extract infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value, for each of the plurality of blocks; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted by the extraction unit.

68. (Withdrawn) A signal processing apparatus for processing a visible light

image signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent document comprising:

a detection unit adapted to detect signal components corresponding to a holder for holding the transparent document from the infrared image signal;

a replacement unit adapted to, when said detection unit detects the signal components corresponding to the holder, replace the signal components by a predetermined signal value;

a generation unit adapted to generate a histogram on the basis of the infrared image signal that has undergone the replacement process by said replacement unit;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value on the basis of the histogram generated in the generation step;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by the calculation unit with the infrared image signal that has not undergone the replacement process, and extract infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted by the extraction unit.

69. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 68, further comprising a unit adapted to calculate an average value of the infrared image signal, wherein the predetermined signal value replaced by said replacement unit is the average value.

70. (Withdrawn) A signal processing method for processing a visible light image

-15-

signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent document, comprising:

a detection unit adapted to detect signal components corresponding to a holder for holding the transparent document from the infrared image signal components;

a removing unit adapted to, when said detection unit detects the signal components corresponding to the holder, removing the signal components;

a generation unit adapted to generate a histogram on the basis of the infrared image signal that has undergone the removing process by said removing unit;

a calculation adapted to calculate a threshold value on the basis of the histogram generated in the generation step;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by the calculation unit with the infrared image signal that has not undergone the removing process, and extract infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted by said extraction unit.

71. (Withdrawn) An image reading apparatus capable of reading a transparent document, comprising:

a visible light source that mainly emits visible light;

an infrared light source that mainly emits infrared light;

a photoelectric converter adapted to convert an optical image into an

electrical signal;

an edge correction unit adapted to perform edge correction of an infrared

image signal obtained via said photoelectric converter by illuminating a transparent document

with light emitted by said infrared light source and generating an edge-corrected infrared image

signal;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value on the basis of the

edge-corrected infrared image signal;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by

said calculation means with the edge-corrected infrared image signal, and extract the edge-

corrected infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of a

visible light image signal, obtained via said photoelectric converter by illuminating the

transparent document with light emitted by said visible light source, on the basis of the edge-

corrected infrared image signal components extracted by said extraction means,

wherein an edge correction amount of said edge correction unit is set in

association with the deterioration of the MTF due to chromatic aberration of an optical focusing

system between visible light and infrared light.

72.- 74. (Canceled)

75. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 71, wherein said calculation

unit generates a histogram on the basis of the edge-corrected infrared image signal, and

calculates the threshold on the basis of the histogram.

76. (Canceled)

77. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 102, wherein said generation unit generates a histogram of frequencies of occurrence of respective gray levels of the infrared image signal.

78. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation unit calculates the threshold value by subtracting a value given by a predetermined relation from a gray level that represents the infrared image signal.

79. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 78, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the value to be subtracted on the basis of the standard deviation.

80. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate an intermediate value of the frequencies of occurrence of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from a gray level corresponding to the intermediate value.

81. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 80, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

82. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 80, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

83. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 80, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the

standard deviation.

84.   (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation

unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum frequency of occurrence of the histogram;

and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined

value from a gray level corresponding to the maximum frequency of occurrence of the

histogram.

85.   (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 84, wherein the predetermined

value is pre-stored.

86.   (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 84, wherein the predetermined

value is externally input.

87.   (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 84, wherein said calculation

unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the

standard deviation.

88.   (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation

unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from the maximum gray level.

89. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 88, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

90. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 88, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

91. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 88, wherein said calculation unit further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

92. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate an average gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a predetermined value from the average gray level.

93. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 92, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

94. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 92, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

95. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 92, wherein said calculation further comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a standard deviation; and

-20-

a unit adapted to determine the predetermined value on the basis of the standard deviation.

96. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by multiplying the maximum gray level by a predetermined value.

97. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 96, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

98. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 96, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

99. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 77, wherein said calculation unit comprises:

a unit adapted to calculate a maximum gray level of the histogram;

a unit adapted to calculate an average gray level of the histogram; and

a unit adapted to calculate the threshold value by subtracting a product, which is obtained by multiplying a difference between the maximum gray level and the average gray level by a predetermined value, from the average gray level.

100. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 99, wherein the predetermined value is pre-stored.

101. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 99, wherein the predetermined value is externally input.

102. (Currently Amended) An image reading apparatus capable of reading a transparent document into an image signal of a plurality of pixels, comprising:

a visible light source that mainly emits visible light;

an infrared light source that mainly emits infrared light;

a photoelectric converter adapted to convert an optical image into an electrical signal of the plurality of pixels;

a segmentation unit adapted to segment an infrared image signal of the plurality of pixels obtained via said photoelectric converter by illuminating a transparent document with light emitted by said infrared light source into a plurality of blocks, wherein each block includes an infrared image signal of two or more pixels,

a generation unit adapted to generate a histogram for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the infrared image signal;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the histogram generated by the generation unit;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by the calculation unit with the infrared image signal, and extracting infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value, for each of the plurality of blocks; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of the visible light image signal obtained via said photoelectric converter by illuminating the transparent document with light emitted by said visible light source, on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted by said extraction unit.

103. (Withdrawn) An image reading apparatus capable of reading a transparent document, comprising:

a visible light source that mainly emits visible light;

an infrared light source that mainly emits infrared light;

a photoelectric converter adapted to convert an optical image into an

electrical signal;

a detection unit adapted to detect signal components corresponding to a

holder for holding the transparent document from an infrared image signal obtained via said

photoelectric converter by illuminating a transparent document with light emitted by said

infrared light source;

a replacement, unit adapted to, when said detection unit detects the signal

components corresponding to the holder, replace the signal components by a predetermined

signal value;

a generation unit adapted to generate a histogram on the basis of the

infrared image signal that has undergone the replacement process by said replacement unit;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value on the basis of the

histogram generated by the generation unit;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by

said calculation unit with the infrared image signal, and extracting infrared image signal

components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of a

visible light image signal obtained via said photoelectric converter by illuminating the

transparent document with light emitted by said visible light source, on the basis of the infrared

image signal components extracted by said extraction unit.

104. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 103, further comprising a

unit adapted to calculate an average value of the infrared image signal, wherein the

predetermined signal value replaced by said replacement unit is the average value.

105. (Withdrawn) An image reading apparatus capable of reading a transparent

document, comprising:

a visible light source that mainly emits visible light;

an infrared light source that mainly emits infrared light;

a photoelectric converter adapted to convert an optical image into an

electrical signal;

a detection unit adapted to detect signal components corresponding to a

holder for holding the transparent document from an infrared image signal obtained via said

photoelectric converter by illuminating a transparent document with light emitted by said

infrared light source;

a removing unit adapted to, when said detection unit detects the signal

components corresponding to the holder, removing the signal components;

a generation unit adapted to generate a histogram on the basis of the

infrared image signal that has undergone the removing process by said removing unit;

a calculation unit adapted to calculate a threshold value on the basis of the

histogram generated by said generation unit;

an extraction unit adapted to compare the threshold value calculated by

said calculation unit with the infrared image signal, and extract infrared image signal

components not more than the threshold value; and

an interpolation unit adapted to execute an interpolation process of a

visible light image signal obtained via said photoelectric converter by illuminating the

transparent document with light emitted by said visible light source, on the basis of the infrared

image signal components extracted in the extraction unit .

106. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer

usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for a

signal processing method for processing a visible light image signal and infrared image signal

obtained by illuminating a transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a

visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly

emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent

document into an image signal of a plurality of pixels, said product including:

first computer readable program code means for segmenting the infrared

image signal of the plurality of pixels into a plurality of blocks, wherein each block includes an

infrared image signal of two or more pixels;

second computer readable program code means for generating a histogram

for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the infrared image signal of each block;

third computer readable program code means for calculating a threshold

value for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the generated histogram;

fourth computer readable program code means for comparing the

calculated threshold value with the infrared image signal, and extracting infrared image signal

components not more than the threshold value, for each of the plurality of blocks; and

fifth computer readable program code means for executing an

interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the extracted infrared image

signal components.